DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 300 031 IR 052 528

AUTHOR	Schamber, Linda
TITLE	ERIC on CD-ROM: Update. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, Syracuse, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-IR-88-1
PUB DATE	May 88
CONTRACT	RI88062008
NOTE	3p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, 030 Huntington Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244-2340 (free while supply lasts).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Bibliographic Databases; *Computer Software; Microcomputers; Online Searching; *Online Systems; *Online Vendors; *Optical Data Disks; *Reference Services
IDENTIFIERS	*ERIC

ABSTRACT

This digest discusses advantages and disadvantages of CD-ROM use in libraries and information centers and lists features of three CD-ROM versions of the ERIC database--Dialog OnDisc ERIC, OCLC Search CD450, and SilverPlatter ERIC. Brief descriptions of these products focus on the differences among them, including equipment requirements, search modes, sorting, onscreen help, and print documentation. Addresses and telephone numbers for the vendors are provided. (MES)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Information F

Syracuse University
School of Education • School of Infor
030 Huntington Hall
Syracuse, New York 13244-2340
(315) 443-3640

ERIC DIGEST

May 1988 ED-IR-88-1

ED300031

ERIC ON CD-ROM: UPDATE

Three vendors are currently delivering CD-ROM (compact disk-read only memory) versions of the ERIC database. This digest will review these products and present information for comparison. No attempt is made to recommend any one product.

Advantages of CD-ROM Use

The mass storage capability of CD-ROM enables libraries and information centers to offer in-house access to large databases formerly available only in print or online. A compact disk can hold about 550 megabytes of data, or the equivalent of 1,500 standard floppy disks or 275,000 pages of information. The entire ERIC database, with its 22 years of citations and indexes, fits on as few as two compact disks.

Because CD-ROM databases are available on a set-fee subscription basis, and CD-ROM systems are self-contained microcomputer-based workstations, institutions can directly predict and control the costs of offering database access without the mainframe connect or communication costs of online services. The more a CD-ROM is searched, the lower the cost is per search. CD-ROM systems allow end-users to do their own searching, thus freeing time for staff members. End-users are able to obtain information directly and to take the time to browse, usually at little or no charge.

Disadvantages of CD-ROM Use

A frequently cited disadvantage of CD-ROM databases is the frequency of update. The ERIC products currently available are updated quarterly. Near the end of an update period, the most recent three months of information are missing. Depending on the information need, this may necessitate supplementing the CD-ROM search with an online search.

Other disadvantages are that one vendor's search software will not read other vendors' CD-ROMs, and that only one user at a time can access a disk. While it seems unlikely that these problems will soon be overcome, other technical improvements are being made. Among these are multi-disk-drive configurations that eliminate the need to switch disks during a search, and local area networks that allow users to access databases from remote sites.

ERIC CD-ROM Systems

Dialog, OCLC, and SilverPlatter are the three vendors now delivering CD-ROM versions of the ERIC database. All three systems offer the entire ERIC database of records from the *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE) and *Resources in Education* (RIE), from 1966 to the present. Each vendor also offers access to at least one other database related to education. The software packages all provide:

- menu-driven operations;
- context-sensitive help screens (accessible at any point during search);
- default free-text searching (automatic searching of entire record);
- index field qualification (specific searching by author, title, etc.);
- browsable index display;
- single-keystroke copying of search terms from index to query;
- right truncation (searching from partial terms);
- Boolean logic (AND, OR, NOT operators);
- proximity and range searching;
- options for forming, modifying, or combining search strategies;
- options for tracking and saving search strategies;
- retrieval of records in reverse chronological order;
- flexible display and print formats (full or partial records);
- downloading of results to hard or floppy disk;
- compatibility of downloaded results with word processors;
- printing all or selected results; and
- user support, including print documentation and toll-free hotline.

The brief descriptions that follow concentrate primarily on differences among the three ERIC CD-ROM products.

DIALOG OnDisc ERIC

OnDisc ERIC contains the entire ERIC database, RIE and CIJE combined, on two compact disks. An important feature of the software is that it allows users to transfer to DIALOG online to continue a search in the most recent portion of the database. This feature also facilitates access to DIALOG databases that complement ERIC, including PsycINFO, Exceptional Child Education Resources, and Social SCISEARCH. The same software works with DIALOG's other CD-ROM products.

OnDisc search software has two modes of use: Command Search for those already familiar with DIALOG online command language, and Easy Menu Search for novice users. The menu mode walks users through a series of well-designed steps from selecting the search field to downloading and printing the resulting records. In both command and menu search modes, more than 20 separate field indexes can be searched, including author, subject, descriptor terms, journal, year, language, document type, and ERIC accession number. The complete *Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors* is also searchable. An expand function allows the user to browse related terms in any index.

The system sorts search results in two sets by type (CIJE and RIE), then subsorts the sets to display the most recent records first. The user can further sort results by any index field, and choose from five display or print formats in the menu search mode, or eight in command search mode.

In addition to easily accessible help screens, the comprehensive print documentation contains sections on each search mode and on ERIC and other DIALOG databases, plus a quick reference guide and demo floppy disk. Other DIALOG resources, available separately, include the large general manual on DIALOG command searching, training seminars for novice

IR052528

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

and experienced users, and videotape instructional modules for classroom use.

OCLC Search CD450

The Search CD450 Education Series contains the ERIC database on four disks and the Education Materials in Libraries (EMIL) database on a fifth disk. The RIE and CIJE portions of the ERIC database are filed separately. EMIL is a 450,000-record subset of the OCLC Online Union Catalog. The same software also searches other OCLC CD-ROM databases.

The Search CD450 user interface is designed with enough flexibility to accommodate both novice and expert users. The screen is divided into three windows: query entry, results tally, and record display. Basic user options are displayed across the bottom of each window at all times as function-key values. Additional windows are overlaid on the standard display when requested. These include help information, fields menu, index display, search history, and menus of display, print, and save options.

The Search CD450 system offers many search fields combined in a single browsable index, but without the expand option. The search history feature allows the user to study previous search strategies and modify or re-execute them. All records retrieved are displayed in reverse order by ERIC accession number. This is the only sort feature available. A menu offers three predetermined display and print formats. The institution can control and customize many features for the end-user, including which fields will be searched with a particular qualifier, what and how records will be displayed, where records will be stored, and the maximum number that can be stored or printed with a single command. Display formats and help screens can also be customized and expanded, using any word processor, to meet the needs and skill levels of users.

Besides easily accessible onscreen help, print documentation with quick reference guide and database fact sheet, and hotline, user support is available through OCLC-affiliated regional networks. For novices, the "getting started" help screen and a demo floppy disk are useful.

A new version of the OCLC education series, to be released in August 1988, will consist of four instead of five disks. Among its many enhancements are separate field indexes and a feature that allows users to preview results by author and title, then choose and sort them in order of interest. A version of the system planned for early 1989 will offer online link capability, the ERIC thesaurus, and the ability to sort results by field.

SilverPlatter ERIC

SilverPlatter fits the ERIC database, RIE and CIJE combined, on three CD-ROMs. The current disk is available on an annual as well as a quarterly update basis. Other CD-ROM databases available through SilverPlatter include PsycLIT (Psychological Abstracts), Sociofile (Sociological Abstracts), LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts), A-V Online (NICEM database), and Peterson's college databases.

The system, which boots up in the FIND mode, is controlled by 14 commands, 10 of which are activated by function keys. Besides free-text searching, there are 16 field indexes, including availability, target audience, and grade level. Major and minor descriptors and identifiers can be searched separately. An expand option lets the user see related terms. A lateral searching feature allows users to select one or more entries from the index, or one or more terms or phrases from a record displayed on the screen, and have the system automatically perform a search on the selection. Editing functions allow the user to modify search strategies.

SilverPlatter sorts search results into two sets by type (CIJE and RIE), then further sorts the two sets so the most recent citations are displayed first. No additional sort capability is offered. The default for screen display or printing is the whole record, but the user can type in other format choices by fields. The system operator or end-user can also set a limit on the number of records to display or print.

The system offers much instructional information to users, including easily accessible help screens, onscreen guides to specific database features and search strategy, and both onscreen and print tutorials. A quick reference guide will soon be released.

Summary

The marketing environment for CD-ROM technologies is very competitive. The three vendors currently offering the ERIC database have all enhanced their products in the past year, to the point where search capabilities, fees, and hardware requirements are becoming more consistent. The database is the same regardless of vendor. DIALOG OnDisc includes the database on the fewest compact disks, adds the ERIC thesaurus as an index choice, and offers the option of online searching for the most recent data. OCLC will offer the thesaurus and a number of new search capabilities later this year.

The search software for all three systems is quite sophisticated, but each system has special features. Among these are DIALOG's two search modes, OCLC's window displays, and SilverPlatter's tutorial. DIALOG appears to offer the most flexibility in the user's ability to sort results, and OCLC in the institution's ability to customize the system. The user support by all three vendors is thorough, but DIALOG's is broadest based in view of its existing schedule of training seminars and its classroom instruction modules.

Hardware requirements for the three systems are similar, but SilverPlatter is the only system that does not require a hard drive for the microcomputer and does not offer color display.

Investing in a CD-ROM database system is a complex decision that requires consideration of individual institutional and user needs as well as software capabilities, the potential of a system to offer access to other databases, and hardware requirements. All three vendors offer subscription rates that include quarterly updates, software enhancements, printed documentation, and toll-free hotlines. SilverPlatter also offers annual updates for a lower fee, plus a one-time instead of an annual fee for archival disks. All the vendors offer some form of hardware purchase or lease agreement, or upgrade/starter kit. When making comparisons, contact vendors directly, as well as other institutions that are currently using these systems.

For Further Information

DIALOG OnDisc ERIC
Marketing Department, Dialog Information Services, Inc.
3460 Hillview Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303
800-3 DIALOG (800-334-2564), 415-858-3785

OCLC Search CD450
Online Computer Library Center
6565 Frantz Road, Dublin, OH 43017-0702
614-764-6000

SilverPlatter
SilverPlatter Information, Inc.
37 Walnut St., Wellesley Hills, MA 02181
617-239-0306

This revision and update of the digest *New Access Points to ERIC: CD-ROM Versions* was prepared by Linda Schamber, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, May 1988.

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, under contract no. RI88062008. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or ED.

OERI
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
OR·CS·LP·PP·IS